



Pan-Africanism in South-Africa

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This article traces in brief the complex character of Pan-African development and the influence it has had on black political thought in South Africa, especially since Ghana's independence in 1957. The author strives to identify basic differences that exist between the Pan-Africanist Congress and the African National Congress in their

approach and struggle for the liberation of South Africa. He also takes account of recent statements on Southern Africa made at the Freiburg Conference in West Germany, and comes to the conclusion that although strongly divided and weakly supported the PAC and ANC must not be underestimated in their drive towards the liberation of South Africa.

The Pan-Africanist Congress of South Africa was a little known black nationalist organisation until the tragic disturbances in the black townships of Sharpsville and Langa on Monday 21 March 1960 when at least 70 people were killed and 200 wounded by police fire.

These unfortunate events had a serious effect on the future legal and peaceful development of African nationalism, and exposed South Africa's racial and social policies to critical international observation, thereby creating a highly unfavourable image of the country overseas.

The PAC is an African nationalist movement aimed at the overthrow of white rule in South Africa. The Congress was not conceived in isolation, as its history and development can be traced to the founding of the Congress Youth League in 1944 and the strong ferment that characterised African politics during the post-war years against the background of pan-African development outside South Africa. Without this there can be no objective or clear understanding of

the PAC and its actions in South Africa.

Pan-Africanism can be described as a "movement that grew out of the social conditions created over the past four hundred years, by migration, mobility and the rapid expansion of communication media. The world-wide demand for labour during this time scattered peoples of African descent throughout the New World and catapulted the African masses long distances from their village homes into the cities, cottonfields and mining compounds of the New World and the African continent." (St. Clair, B. 1958, 'World-Wide Negro plan for federation of Africa,' *Contact* Vol 1 no 2).

Immanuel Geiss, eminent scholar of Pan-Africanism, described it as "An intellectual and political movement among Afro-Americans and Africans who regarded Africa and peoples of African descent as homogeneous and which advocate or have advocated political unity of Africa or at least close political collaboration in one form or another at some or other stage. This

outlook led to a feeling of racial-solidarity and a new self-awareness and caused Afro-Americans to look upon Africa as their real *homeland* without necessarily thinking of a physical return to Africa," and "All ideas which have stressed or sought the cultural unity and political independence of Africa including the desire to modernize Africa on the basis of equality of rights. The key concept here being the *redemption of Africa and Africa for the Africans respectively*". (Geiss, I. 1974, *The Pan-African Movement* London: Methuen).

The study of Pan-Africanism becomes extremely complex due to the fact that Pan-African development took place in various areas simultaneously in North Africa, the West Indies, West Africa in particular and Europe (especially England). In addition events indicated some measure of interaction, and must always be seen in the wider framework of the general European, American and African history.

This complexity increases further as

result of development along the different planes of significance. Geiss identifies several of these. *Firstly*, Pan-Africanism has frequently taken the form of a movement among coloured and colonial peoples. *Secondly*, Pan-Africanism can be understood as 'Pan-Negroism' with the emphasis on race, ignoring Arabic North Africa and concentrating on the solidarity between black Africans and Afro-Americans. *Thirdly*, Pan-Africanism

African personality, while to others it implies negritude. To many it connotes a situation which finds the whole of the African continent free from the shackles of foreign domination, with leaders free to plan for the orderly progress and welfare of inhabitants.

In the idiom of the twentieth century Pan-Africanism can therefore be regarded as a powerful movement, neo-colonialism, imperialism, tribal-

in the Pan-African movement, for the first time. It resulted from the personalities and concepts of the two most famous Pan-Africanists in history, Marcus Garvey and Dr W E B du Bois. Garvey was an Afro-Jamaican with radical Pan-African views, a firm believer in the motto *Africa for the Africans*. He established the "Universal Negro Improvement Association" and used it to propagate the idea that Africans and people of

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only attained the form from which it derives the name and meaning generally associated after the unity of the African continent had become the goal, and Afro-Americans of the New World had been excluded. Here two further categories may be distinguished, the drive for the unity of black Africa, south of the Sahara, and the goal of a united African continent that will include the Arabic north. This has two important implications. On the one hand it sees Africa, south of the Sahara, as a black entity where multi-racial or coloured co-operation is regarded with disfavour. On the other it views Pan-African unity, north of the Sahara, as a multi-racial entity that includes the Arabs. A *fourth* distinction is that regional unions have frequently been regarded as a preliminary stage on the road to continental unity. Pan-Africanism has also developed on a national basis. Until a short time ago concrete action took place on this level as a rule, whereas theoretical discussions, propaganda and agitation were orientated mainly on the supranational plane. As in the case of the Fanti of West Africa, nationalism frequently developed at tribal level as well.

Adekunde Ajala (1973. *Pan-Africanism, Evolution, Progress and Prospects*. London. A Deutsch) describes Pan-Africanism as a "common experience of discrimination based on skin colour, and a flagrant injustice and degradation, combined to make people of African descent in both the United States and Africa realize that they face the same problems and must therefore unite in order to find a solution. It brought about the wish to redeem Africa from the source of imperialism and colonialism." Out of this, he concluded, "grew the ideals of African nationalism and eventual Pan-Africanism." Dr du Bois, a leading Pan-Africanist, seen by many as the father of the Pan-African movement described it as "a hazy, vague emotion – a vision or a dream."

Pan-Africanism also has a different meaning for different people. To some it denotes the search for an

ism and racialism or any other force that may stand in the way of Pan-African development or of Pan-Africanists in their drive towards a united states of Africa.

The history and development of Pan-Africanism as an Afro-American and African solidarity movement, aimed at the cultural and political unity of Africa, can be divided into roughly three historical development phases.

The first is an early phase of proto-Pan-Africanism in the broadest sense of the word, reaching from approximately 1787 until the convening of the first Pan-African conference by Henry Sylvester Williams in London in 1900.

A distinguished American Negro-Africanist has described this period as an informal organisation of memories by people who found themselves a long way away from home. It represented a growing consciousness among New World Negroes that they were scattered fragments of viable cultures and living peoples back home in Africa. This was the founding era of Pan-Africanism, and a time of increasing desire for a return to the country of their birth among the Afro-Americans and Africans. This was the period when early humanitarians like Brissot, Condorcet, W Wilberforce, the free Negro's like David Walker, Nat Turner, F Douglas and Martin Delany played an important role in the abolishment of slavery. It also saw growing resistance among Negroes and Africans to accept a status which made them either subservient or inferior to their masters of European origin.

The second period or phase, stretches from approximately 1900 – 1945 when the Manchester Conference gave evidence of the growth from African nationalism into black nationalism. This was a period of *national gestation* in Africa, when African, Afro-American and Afro-West Indian intellectuals evolved ideas. During this era a serious split emerged

African descent could only achieve equality through personal endeavour. Garvey was a leading supporter of the back-to-Africa-movement, and gave Pan-Africanism a definite mass-character that had many followers. Dr Nkrumah once said that Garvey's philosophies and opinions had played an important part in his own orientation towards nationalist leadership. It is therefore not surprising that Ghana called the first black shipping company *Black Starline*, the name of Garvey's unsuccessful African venture.

Du Bois, on the other hand, believed that co-operation with white liberals was essential in the African's struggle to achieve equality. He organized four Pan-African congresses in the intermediate post-war years, and was dominated by the idea that "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the coloured line, and that the bond of solidarity between peoples of African descent is primarily symbolized by colour." Regarded as the "Father of Pan-Africanism" by Pan-Africanists all over the world he was a moderate black leader, and exercised a deep influence on the development of Pan-Africanism, although the actual synthesis of ideas only occurred at the fifth Pan-African congress held at Manchester in 1945. About his aims du Bois wrote: "My plans as they developed had in them nothing spectacular or revolutionary. If in decades or a century they resulted in such world organisations of black men as would oppose a united front to European aggression, that certainly would not have been beyond my dream." (St Clair D. 1958. "World-wide Negro plan for Federation of Africa).

Differences between du Bois and Garvey in the interpretation of Pan-Africanism had a serious effect on the later development of black nationalist movements and Pan-Africanism in Africa.

Garvey's particular Pan-African concepts and his criticism of du Bois as a "white man's nigger and traitor to the

race" were all too clearly reflected in the South African Africanist Movement's attacks on the moderate and multi-racial African National Congress for their collaboration with white and Indian liberals and communists.

The third and perhaps most significant period is the development of Pan-Africanism towards and since the Manchester Pan-African Congress of 1945. Until this date Pan-Africanism was mainly Afro-American and Afro-European and the centre of gravity was located outside Africa. The end of World War II had engendered an atmosphere of greater racial and national consciousness however, and agitation increased for the protection of human rights and minority groups from racial exploitation.

The actions and philosophies of George Padmore, West-Indian journalist and pro-Marxist Pan-Africanist had a strong influence on this particular development that coincided with a growing wish among prominent Pan-Africanists such as du Bois to convene a fifth Pan-African Congress that would revive the Pan-Africanist movement from its post-1930 depression slump and make it a truly African movement. Padmore had been of the Hamburg based communist-affiliated Bureau of Profintern until 1934, and President of the International Service Bureau since 1937, (he was expelled from the communist party and Profintern in 1934), and exerted a strong radical influence on the development of Pan-Africanism during the years immediately before and after the fifth Pan-African Congress of 1945.

His strong Marxist overtones and class-analysis of Pan-Africanism were not always shared by fellow Pan-Africanists such as Sékou Touré, and Aimé Césaire, who later broke with the communist party as a result of, as Padmore puts it "the eroding influence of doctrinaire Marxism", thereby pushing the pendulum in the opposite direction.

The origins of Pan-Africanism as a doctrine have always been highly ambivalent on the relationship of class and race. The extent of Marxism or Marxian analysis as a valid basis for the understanding of Africa's problems has never been clearly understood.

Pan-Africanists have adopted a

It was argued that the classless nature of contemporary African society, the consequent inapplicability of a Marxian analysis to the international and national politics of independent African states, and the feasibility of a transition to modern socialism without passing through a bourgeoisie or capitalist phase made the acceptability of socialism based on a class struggle irrelevant to Africa's problems.

Regarded by many as the father of theoretical Pan-Africanism, Padmore set out with the help and support of the influential West African Student Union (WASU) in London and West Africa to prepare for the Fifth Pan-African Congress which took place in Manchester in October 1945. He worked in close co-operation with fellow West Indian Africanists like TR Makamen, Peter Abrahams of South Africa, Kwame Nkrumah whom he had met in London in 1945, and Jomo Kenyatta. The Congress was eventually held through their tireless efforts, Pan-Africanism assumed the shape of a political movement for the liberation from colonialism, racialism, white-domination and capitalism for Africa as a whole.

Attended by at least 200 delegates from black states all over the world, the Manchester Conference proved to be a watershed in the development of Pan-Africanism. For the first time in the movement's history a large African leadership element, thanks to the efforts and dedication of Africans such as Nkrumah and Kenyatta was present.

Some of them, like Kenyatta, Nkrumah, Padmore, Wallace Johnston, Chief Anikitoal and Peter Abrahams, took an active part during debates on issues of African nationalism and Pan-African unity. Discussions on the necessity for and organisation of firmly knitted nationalist movements as a pre-condition for successful national liberation struggle against racialism and colonialism made anti-imperialism and de-colonization major themes of the conference. The slogan *Colonial and Subject Peoples of the World Unite* called upon workers, farmers and all intellectuals in the colonial territories to actively unite against colonialism, imperialism and racialism.

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clear that Pan-Africanism was evolving from a protest movement, by people of African descent in the West Indies and the United States, into an instrument of African nationalist movements fighting colonial rule. In its wider connotation it became a mass-movement of Africans for Africans.

Although the Manchester Conference had provided an outlet for African nationalism and marked the beginning of a new era in the history of Pan-African development, there were no real or serious developments in Africa until Ghana's independence in 1957 and the two Accra Conferences of 1958. It was only after the Gold Coast had become the independent state of Ghana under Nkrumah's leadership in 1957, that the Pan-African movement became an African reality and as such took an important step forward.

Nkrumah, who had strong links with fellow Pan-Africanists such as Padmore, S M Apithy, L S Senghor and F Houphouët-Boigny, stated that Ghana's independence would be meaningless unless it was linked to the liberation of Africa. He also made it clear that Ghana would take the lead in the liberation of Africa, and form the nucleus of a greater African unity. Nkrumah convened a Conference of Independent African States in April 1958 to put these ideas into practice. This was followed by a second conference, the All-African Peoples Conference held in December of the same year. Accra hosted both conferences that strongly influenced the future development of Pan-Africanism in Africa. The character of Pan-Africanism changed from a movement for the establishment of a supra-national entity or entities, encompassing various independent African states, into a movement for the establishment of a United States of Africa. The conferences were attended by delegates from African as well as Arab states, giving African Pan-Africanism a strong multi-racial colour. They also aimed to co-ordinate the African non-violent revolution, raise the morale of Africans from the Cape to Cairo, and discuss the possibilities of federation. For the first time in the history of Africa a combination of African and coloured leaders passed a resolution

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position of convenience in their search for a better understanding of Pan-Africanism and have never really accepted or rejected a Marxian analysis of Pan-Africanism, but tended to use both concepts simultaneously.

colonial struggle had entered a new and militant phase after 1945, "while leftist elements in Britain and other imperialist countries were called upon to recognise and support it".

By the end of 1945 it had become

to work towards a commonwealth of united African States. Black South African writer, E Mphahlele expressed the wish for closer co-operation and unity when he said: "I come here in the faith that when the time comes we

shall have the support of every country and every African on the continent." (Hoskyn C. 1959. "Pan Africanism at Accra". *Africa South* Vol 3 no 3.)

Although the two Accra conferences did not achieve very much on paper, they nevertheless represented a significant step forward in Africa's drive towards unity, and were soon followed by two important events, the Conakry Declaration in May 1959, and Sanniquellie Declaration in July of the same year.

Both declarations resulted from direct efforts on the part of Ghana, Guinea and Liberia to form a West African union with open membership to any independent black state in Africa, and marked Ghana's first serious attempt to create a union of African states, and eventually a United States of Africa. At the same time they provided the Pan-African movement with its first cause for serious discontent.

Nkrumah's concept of Pan-African unity with Ghana at the centre proved unpopular. Nnamdi Azikiwe, a leading Pan-Africanist in Nigeria, made this clear when he maintained that certain practical steps were necessary before African unity became possible. He was also of the opinion that "if for many years parties had fought for their sovereignty, it was unlikely that they would surrender that sovereignty to a nebulous organization (or country) simply because they felt it necessary to work together." (*Ghana Daily Telegraph*. 22 July 1959.)

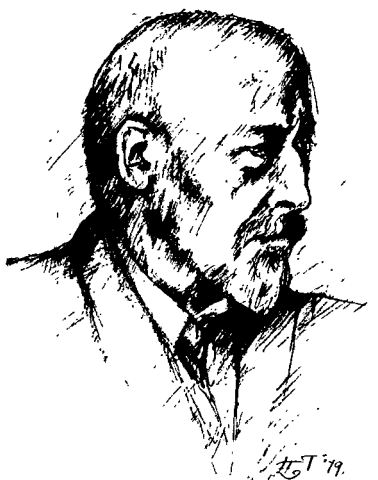
A second All-African Peoples Conference was held in Tunisia in January 1960 amid increasing differences of opinion on Pan-unity issues. This was followed by a second conference of All-Independent African States at the end of the same year. Both conferences differed from the previous two as they placed far greater emphasis on the concept of African unity, and paid more attention to the political, economic and social aspects of Pan-Africanism. Notably, they were marked by the absence of African states from the former French Colonial Empire, and clearly indicated the lukewarm attitude of certain African leaders towards Pan-Africanism and unity.

The Tunisia conference also marked the beginning of open confrontation between African leaders who had a different approach to African unity, and rival blocks such as Monrovia, Casablanca and Brazzaville formed as a result.

Although this discord presented a serious problem to African unity, it nevertheless furthered Pan-Africanism from idealism and roman-

ticism to practical politics and the rapid formation of Nationalist movements.

Wallerstein has described the period from Ghana's independence to that of the Congo's in 1960 as one of "glory and optimism for Africa in its drive towards the objective Pan-Africanism, namely a United States of Africa". (1967. *Africa, the Politics of Unity*, New York. Vintage Books.) Most of West and North Africa had by



William E B du Bois

the end of 1960, achieved independence or were making good progress while similar development was under way in East Africa.

Although the independence fever that was evident all over Africa by the end of 1960, did not represent a direct or pure form of Pan-Africanism, it nevertheless furnished an important pre-condition as national unity and independence were a prerequisite for Pan-African unity. This concept took an important step forward when the Organization of African Unity was established in 1963, and it received a constitutional basis and mandate for positive action against colonialism and racialism, the enemies of African unity. African leaders and national movements campaigning for equal rights and national independence grew confident that it was only a matter of time before the whole of Africa would become independent. This belief was particularly strong among national movements in Southern Africa in the early Sixties. There was a struggle that would be continued until the unity of Africa was achieved.

Although the founding of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) in 1912 had provided blacks in South Africa with their first real nationalist organisation for black representation there was no real Pan-

African development before the outbreak and end of World War II. This was largely due to the fact that although the SANNC (known as the African National Congress (ANC) after 1925) had adopted a strong du Bois character and moderate approach to racial discrimination, it had little or no use for a Pan-African approach to its problems in South Africa. The ANC was not thinking in terms of an independent black South Africa but



Marcus Garvey

rather in terms of an independent multi-racial South Africa without racial discrimination. Garvey's pro-black and strong anti-white interpretation of African nationalism did not correspond with the ANC's moderate stand. As a result many pro-Garvey and communist supporters turned their attention to the newly established Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICWU). After the collapse of the ICWU in 1928, even the direct efforts on the part of pro-communists and Garveyists such as James Gumede and the African paper *Abantu Batho* to use the weak ANC as a springboard for Garvey's radical Pan-African views produced a little support for Pan-Africanism. These were extremely barren years for the development of African nationalism. Walshe wrote that "in contrast to the persistent influence of B T Washington and the largely coincidental aspects of du Bois's approach, Marcus Garvey's ideas had little influence within Congress" until the early 1930s.

Garvey had a delayed impact on Africa and the ANC of South Africa. It was not until five to ten years after support for his ideas had reached a peak in the West Indies and America that his theories had a definite but limited influence on a group of young right-wing radicals in the ANC towards the mid 1930s.

This came as result of growing

dissatisfaction with the ANC's half-hearted opposition to legislation introduced by Prime Minister Hertzog in 1936 which strengthened the South African government's segregationist policy, and the slow infiltration of the ANC leadership by communists and liberals.

These differences that were threatening to split the leadership¹ became more evident after the ANC had convened the All-African Convention in Bloemfontein in 1935. They gave rise to the establishment of an African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) that would provide the ANC with new and stronger leadership, and laid the foundation for post-war Pan-African development in South Africa.

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The Youth League was started by a group of young black intellectuals, who in their middle-class status resembled the founder members of the ANC in 1912. The League was to produce a strong sense of African nationalism and Pan-African solidarity after 1944.

From its inception in 1912 until the outbreak of World War II in 1939 ANC policy revolved around a moderate and strictly non-violent representation of African demands and grievances. This moderate approach resulted in an inability to obtain any notable concessions for reform, and by 1930 African protest had turned into a wave of general condemnation of the entire structure of apartheid and racial discrimination, and strong criticism of ANC leadership.

In the post-1930 years South Africa's commitment to the war effort, the Atlantic Charter, establishment of the United Nations Organisation, and the war between Italy and Ethiopia all helped to further and stimulate the development of black consciousness and a Pan-solidarity feeling among blacks in the country.

From the early Forties this new ferment had been characterized by the outspokenness of young African teachers and other intellectuals. Jordan Ngubane wrote: "As the circle in which I moved in Johannesburg widened, I realised that the

¹The ANC had in fact experienced a minor split in 1930 when communists and left-wing radicals after several unsuccessful attempts to capture the ANC leadership broke away to form an independent ANC with a strong marxist and militant programme for action. This was a short lived-failure and had fallen apart by 1931.

ferment that was in me was in everybody else." ("Fourty years as a Kaffir", *Drum*, January 1954). To these young intellectuals the idea of exclusiveness in African political thought and the desire to promote self-reliance, self-determination and national pride did not merit a policy of non-European unity. The need for stronger and more dynamic ANC leadership was particularly evident among young leaders such as William Nkomo, Robert Resha, Jordan Ngubane, Walter Sisulu, A P Mda, Anton Lembede, Peter Raboroko and Nelson Mandela. The need for vigilance against communism and elements fostering non-African interests, led to the founding of the ANC Youth League in 1944, by A P Mda, Anton Lembede and J Ngubane. Anton Lembede was the most outstanding personality in the early history of the League, and was elected president in 1944. He was a convinced Pan-Africanist and supporter of Garvey's slogan *Africa for the Africans* and provided his followers in the ANC and Youth League with a strong ideological basis for Pan-African development. Lembede also founded the Africanist movement¹ and did everything in his power to convert the ANC leadership to his strong Africanist and nationalist be-



Nobel Prize winner Albert Luthuli

liefs. Under his guidance the Youth League adopted the Pan-African slogan *Africa for the Africans* and strongly rejected any foreign aid for the ANC. He also resisted any Marxist interpretation of African politics in South Africa as this was contrary to his belief that Africans should depend on

¹The Africanists supported a strong policy of Africanism and were responsible for the founding of the Pan-Africanist Congress in 1959.

their own strength as an oppressed people in securing their freedom. Lembede's Africanist views did not coincide with the predominant views in the Youth League however. From its inception in 1944 a small group with strong Marxist leanings had formed around Willie Nkomo and Lionel Majonbezi. It was small however and the object of strong opposition on the part of the main Youth League body that was highly suspicious of any communist overtures and influence. At the same time there was evidence of ideological differences between what could be described as an Africanist and an African nationalist group within the main anti-communist body of the League.

The African nationalist group consisted of individuals like J Ngubane, A P Mda, Oliver Tambo, Mbombo Yenwa and Vivian Ncakeni who insisted on the "need for African political assertion but were constantly aware of the dangers of the extremist and inward-looking Black nationalism". (Walshe P. 1970. *The rise of African nationalism in South Africa*. New York. Vintage Books.)

The Africanist group consisted of people like Anton Lembede, Walter Sisulu, and Peter Raboroko who were inclined to worry less about the dangers of engendering anti-white or anti-Indian attitudes, as long as they could develop an ideology that was "dynamic enough to rouse the African masses to political awareness and action". (Walshe P. 1970. p 356.)

Although Africanists and their followers regard Lembede as the "Father of Pan-Africanism" in South Africa, he never made any clear distinction between Africanism and African nationalism, and considered the concepts synonymous.

Fellow Youth Leaguers have however described him as a "leading advocate of Garvey's outlook and out and out Africanist when it came to issues of multi-racialism." (Walshe P. 1970. p 105.) Recalling the writings of the 1944 Youth League Manifesto, Dr Mbata said that Lembede felt that "the very colour of the African links him with the colour of the soil of Africa" - *adscriptus glebae*. "There was nothing to be ashamed of in being Black". (Walshe P. 1970. p 105-106.)

A P Mda became president of the Youth League after Lembede's death in 1948 and did not share his predecessor's strong Africanist views. Mda was a moderate nationalist who went to great lengths to explain that "African nationalism only hates white oppression and white domination and not the white people themselves". Mda's views found a powerful reflection in the Fort Hare Youth

League branch that was founded in 1948 as a result of close co-operation with other moderate youth leaguers such as Oliver Tambo, Jordan Ngubane, Peter Raboroko and Robert M Sobukwe, who later became president of the Pan-African Congress (PAC).

Until the Fort Hare Youth League branch came into existence there was no clear distinction between African Nationalism and Africanism in the main Youth League body. Youth League documents prior to 1948 contain elements of racial exclusiveness (such as the unity of All-Africa from the Mediterranean in the north to Indian and Atlantic Oceans in the south) as well as references to non-racialism and multi-racialism. The introduction and acceptance of the Youth League basic policy in 1948 was the first clear and final distinction between Africanism and African nationalism. Africanist views based on Garvey's *Africa for the African*, *hurl the white man into the sea and quit Africa*, were condemned as extreme and ultra-revolutionary. The Youth League accepted a moderate form of African nationalism as its basis for future action, and stated "we of the Congress Youth League take account of a concrete situation and realise that the different racial groups should stay". (Walshe P. 1970. p 336-357.)

called Congress Alliance, an association between the ANC, South African Indian Congress (SAIC), Congress of Democrats (COD) and the Coloured People's Organisation that raised strong objections among the Africanists. They criticised the Alliance as a betrayal of African nationalism and voiced their fears of a white takeover in the ANC leadership. The Alliance which was seen by many as an effective unity of the different races in South Africa in opposition to white nationalism, created even wider division among Africans – a split that widened and became permanent where Z K Matthew suggested the convening of a multi-racial National Convention in 1955.

The Africanists were not the only group to oppose the ANC's multi-racial stand. In 1946, S Thema reacted to the ANC's multi-racial policy by stating that the time was coming when the Council would have to preach *Africa for the Africans* and if it continued along its present course it would have to form a Pan-African movement. Although an Africanist in tone, Thema did not support the Africanist interpretation of African nationalism. His main concern was the close cooperation between the ANC and SAIC. He broke with the ANC in 1950, and formed the ANC National Minded Block and attacked the ANC

Other organisations included the Bantu National Congress of Mr Bhengu who aimed at a purified Bantu organisation and non-cooperation with Indian and other racial groups, and the Supreme Council of African Organisations that called on Africans to renounce the Indian-directed Congress movement.

Although these dissident groups were relatively shortlived they nevertheless underline the differences within the ANC. By the late Fifties the ANC's popularity had fallen from 100 000 members during the 1952 Defiance Campaign to about 30 000.

Africanist opposition to the ANC leadership and its multi-racial stand culminated in the dispute over the adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1956. The Africanists were upset by the complete lack of any reference to African liberation, inter-African co-operation and the doctrines of Pan-Africanism, and attacked the Charter that called for peace and friendship within South Africa and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation, not warfare. Although they could not object to this they voiced strong opposition to the opening notes of the Charter which stated that "we, the people of South Africa, declare: that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim

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At the beginning of the Fifties many Youth Leaguers considered anti-communism and group exclusiveness less important when they became more influential in the ANC leadership.

The gradual swing towards a more moderate and multi-racial interpretation of South Africa's racial problems among Youth League and ANC members met with fervent criticism from the Africanist camp. They were strong in their rejection of the ANC-inspired defiance campaign as a non-African and communist interpretation of the Youth League's Programme of Action and this resulted in the eventual splitting of the Transvaal ANC on the eve of the defiance campaign, and the rapid development of the Africanist movement after 1952.

These events and the new Nationalist Government under Dr D F Malan that came to power in 1948 determined to implement separate development to the full, compelled the ANC to seek closer co-operation with other racial groups in South Africa like the Indians and Coloureds. The result was the founding of the so-

leadership as "paid agents of the Indian merchants". (Nokwe D. 1960. "Congress and the Africanists", "Congress replies". *Africa South*. April-June).

authority unless it is based on the will of the people . . ." (Gibson R. 1972. *African Liberation Movements in South Africa; – Contemporary struggle against white minority rule.* London.



Robert Sobukwe



Oliver Tambo



Burning building during the 1976 Soweto riots (Pretoria News)

They also criticised the Charter as a "betrayal of the Youth League principles on nationalism and self-reliance" (Raboroko P N, 1960. Congress and the Africanists. The Africanist case. *Africa South*. April-June) and labelled its supporters 'Charterists'.

In 1958 the final break came when the Africanists refused to support a proposed one-day strike the ANC had organised in the Transvaal. Africanist criticism of the strike as yet another example of the *white tail wagging the black dog*, and its subsequent collapse, resulted in a purge of rank and file Africanists from the Transvaal ANC, and a mass walkout by Africanists under the leadership of P Leballo and J Madzunjia at the Annual Congress of the Transvaal ANC in November 1958. This particular development in South Africa must also be seen against the wider background and influence of developments in Africa, such as Ghana's independence in 1957 and the two Accra Conferences held under the leadership of K Nkrumah in 1958. According to Matthews Nkoana the All African Peoples Conference which followed the earlier meeting of Independent African States had "a great impact and influence on the Transvaal dissidents". (Lodge T. *Contact* 59.04.18).

Defending the Africanist case Peter Raboroko wrote that "in sharp contrast to ex-Chief Albert Luthuli's statement" (in which he asked for a

good government irrespective of colour), Dr K Nkrumah, Prime Minister of Ghana, told the opening session of all All-African Peoples Conference in Accra that, "This is the decade of African independence. We welcome into our midst people from all other nations who desire to live among us in peace and equality. But they must respect us and our rights, our right as the majority to rule. To this the Africanists would like to add, they must also respect us and our rights, our rights as the indigenous peoples, our rights as the workers and peasants and our rights as the majority to rule. These rights as our Western friends have taught us to understand, constitute the essential elements of nationalism, socialism and democracy. The African people are determined to liberate themselves and to establish and maintain an Africanist Socialist democracy, which will recognise the material and spiritual interests of the individual, and be original in concept, Africanist in orientation, socialistic in content, democratic in form and creative in purpose". (Raboroko P N. 1960. Congress and the Africanists. The Africanist Case. *Africa South*, April-June.)

Against this background, and strongly under the influence of Pan-African development in Africa since 1957, the Africanists formed the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) in April 1959. Robert Sobukwe was elected as

the first president, and Potlako Leballo became national secretary. Josias Madzunjia who was a devoted Africanist and one of the break-away leaders, was not elected to the new organisation. This later proved to have been a serious mistake as his criticism of PAC leadership threatened to split the movement on the very eve of the anti-pass campaign.

Politically the Africanists and PAC stood for "a government of the Africans for the Africans, with everybody who owes his only loyalty to Africa and who is prepared to accept the democratic rule of an African majority being regarded as an African." They also declared, "we guarantee no minority rights, because we think in terms of individuals – not groups." Whites and upper-class Indians were excluded from those owing their first loyalty to Africa, for the time being however as they benefitted materially from the existing dispensation and therefore were not in a position to identify themselves completely with the African cause. (Molete Z B. 1965. *The Basic Documents of the Pan-Africanist of South Africa*. Lusaka. Zambia. Unpublished.) As a result of their material position, only the "down-trodden, poor stinking coolies" of Natal could identify themselves with the indigenous African majority in their struggle to overthrow white supremacy". (Sobukwe R. 1959. "Sobukwe outlines



Rioters in Tembisa township during the 1976 unrest (Pretoria News)

the Africanist Case" Contact. 30 May.)

The PAC also rejected multi-racial co-operation on the grounds that it was a method of "safeguarding White interests irrespective of population figures". They saw South Africa as an integral part of Africa, and declared that the country could not solve her problems in isolation, and with utter disregard for, the rest of the continent. They aimed to "unite and rally the African people into one national front on the basis of African nationalism" to fight for the overthrow of white domination and for the implementation and maintenance of the right of self-determination for the African people . . . and to promote and propagate the concept of the federation of Southern Africa and Pan-

Africans throughout the continent that their destiny is one, that what happens in one part of Africa to Africans must affect Africans living in other parts." He added "we honoured Ghana as the first independent state in modern Africa which, under the courageous nationalist leadership of Dr Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party had actively interested itself in the liberation of the whole continent from White domination, and had held out the vision of a democratic United States of Africa. We regard it as the sacred duty of every African state to strive ceaselessly and energetically for the creation of a United States of Africa." (Molete, Z B. 1965.)

Communism and liberalism were

PAC membership numbered at least 340 000 were later disputed as having been far too high. Duma Nokwe defended the ANC and claimed that the PAC had in fact had more than 2 500 members by the beginning of the 1960s.

Be this as it may, the nature of the 1952 defiance campaign had shown that popular action could rapidly and unexpectedly swell the ranks of the movement.

Sobukwe made the announcement at the conference in December 1959 that the PAC intended launching a non-violent status campaign against the pass laws early in 1960, and that it would use the slogan *No Bail No Defence No Fine*.

As a result ANC members, who felt

"Communism and liberalism were regarded as synonymous concepts; both exploited the African masses and their organisations for the benefit of Marxism and liberalism."

Africanism by promoting unity among peoples of Africa." (Molete Z B. 1965. *The basic documents of the PAC of South Africa*. Lusaka. Zambia (Unpublished.))

The Africanists claimed these aims were founded on a coalescence of the aims of the ANC Youth League and the historic task of African nationalism.

Clarifying the PAC relation with the rest of Africa, Sobukwe declared that it could be summed up precisely and briefly by quoting from George Padmore's *Pan-Africanism*, in which he observed "there is a growing feeling among politically conscious

regarded as synonymous concepts; both exploited the African masses and their organisations for the benefit of Marxism and liberalism.

In spite of its radical views and attacks on the ANC leadership in South Africa, the PAC failed to recruit a large following. Leballo's hopes for a PAC membership of 100 000 by the middle of 1959 never materialized. The secretary of the Cape PAC branch, P Kgosana, later estimated that the PAC had had at most 900 members in the Cape Province and about 150 in Sharpeville itself. Africanist claims on the eve of the anti-pass campaign that

that their leadership had been endangered by the PAC's militant plans considered themselves compelled to start thinking in terms of forcing their leaders to accept a strategy of action. The ANC therefore announced similar plans at its annual conference in December 1959 for an anti-pass campaign. This would start on 31 March 1960 and be launched in close collaboration with the anti-pass measures of the newly formed Organisation of Fourteen or Bishop's Committee under the Bishop of Johannesburg, the Right Rev Ambrose Reeves.

Chief Albert Luthuli of the Zulu people did not agree with this new and militant development in the ANC, and warned its leaders against any hasty decisions that might lead to rash action. The spirit of militant action had however taken root. In an attempt to forestall the ANC, Sobukwe announced during a press conference in Johannesburg on 18 March 1960 that the PAC would launch its anti-pass campaign on 21 March, ten days before the ANC's planned action. Thousands of Africans would be asked to stay away from work on this day and congregate at the nearest police station without their pass books demanding to be arrested. The PAC hoped this would paralyse the country's penal and legal system, and create sufficient chaos, thereby forcing the government's unconditional resignation.

The ANC was invited to join the pass campaign, but rejected the appeal on the grounds that the planned action was ill-planned and had no hope of success. In spite of this the PAC retained the initiative by means of the popular appeal of their anti-pass campaign had generated and managed to attract at least 15 000 blacks at Sharpeville and 6 000 at Langa and Nyanga. Characteristically, the movement drew larger numbers of people into its orbit that were not actually committed to its goals.

On 21 March 1960 the police opened fire on demonstrators in the black townships of Sharpeville and Langa in an attempt to restore law and order. At least 70 were killed and a further 200 wounded. What had started as a peaceful demonstration against the pass laws turned into violence and bloodshed. The riots and general chaos followed the collapse of the PAC pass campaign, and the South African government was compelled to take extreme action. A state of emergency was announced in 120 of the country's

left the country for the High Commission Territories, and other parts of Africa and Europe where they could reconstruct and aid their respective movements in renewed attacks on white rule in South Africa. These exiles were also instrumental in obtaining financial and military aid to establish the underground movements that emerged after 1960.

After being banned in April 1960 the PAC set about activating Poqo, its secret underground organisation, Stanley Motjuwadi described the development of Poqo as follows: "We were faced with new and advance tasks. We had no choice but to organise our work on revolutionary lines and to mobilise the people in the spirit of revolutionary struggle for state power." (*Drum*, No 122. Nov 1972. p 19.)

Poqo, or *Um Africa Poqo* as it was also known, was not in fact a new organisation. The word means "un-adulterated African nationalist", and had been used as a code name for the PAC in the Western Cape Province as far back as the early 1960s. There have even been claims that Bantu Methodists used the term when they broke with the European church in the 1930s. No matter what the case may be, Poqo and the PAC were in fact a single organisation. They subscribed to the same principles and aims, the only difference lay in their methods of implementation. Unlike *Umkonto We sizwe*, (the Spear of the Nation) which was only founded after the ANC's multi-racial All-in African Conference had ended in failure in Pietermaritzburg in May 1961, and that aimed its deeds of sabotage against property rather than people, Poqo made use of witchcraft and fear to establish and to maintain secrecy. Several people, black as well as white, were killed during the course of 1961 and 1962 in an effort to ensure secrecy. This policy proved so effective that until April 1962 the police

dence during December 1962.

The exposure of Poqo's aims and activities during 1962 coincided with the release of Potlako Leballo and other PAC members from detention, as well as the reorganisation of the Maseru Branch of the PAC that took place towards the latter part of 1962. Leballo and his associates had planned on using this base to regain control of the PAC and Poqo in South Africa. By the end of 1962 Maseru had become the external headquarters of the PAC and the Poqo movement.

Towards the end of 1962 Leballo sent messages to 150 Poqo cell leaders in South Africa instructing them to prepare for the final attack on white rule planned for the beginning of 1963. He then called a press conference in Maseru in March 1963 and announced that a 150 000-strong Poqo (PAC) force was ready to overthrow white rule in South Africa as soon as he gave the command. Several newsletters were also despatched to Poqo leaders and members informing them that "African nationalism was now poised to unleash an invincible knock-out blow against white supremacy, and the savagery of Verwoerdism in South Africa." (Benson M. 1966. *South Africa: the struggle for a birthright*. London.)

Leballo's optimism proved to be shortlived. On 1 April the Basuto police raided the PAC offices in Maseru, and arrested several members and leaders. Leballo, who escaped the raid, was forced to flee. Lists of names found during the raid enabled the South African police to organise country-wide swoops on Poqo and PAC cells, and hundreds were arrested. They also uncovered ammunition dumps as well as plans for attacks on Pretoria and Johannesburg that were scheduled for April. By the end of 1963 Poqo and the PAC had collapsed. Leballo left Basutoland early in 1964 to settle in Ghana.

"It (Sharpeville) also marked the beginning of new era in the history of South African race relations, ending the concept of non-violent action."

200 magistracies and the PAC and the ANC were banned on 8 April, creating considerable criticism of South Africa and the country's racial policies abroad as well as locally. It also marked the beginning of a new era in the history of South African race relations, ending the concept of non-violent action.

During the massive police round-up of PAC leaders, members and intimidators that followed the events of 21 March, at least 1 650 persons including 94 whites, 24 Coloureds, 81 Indians and 51 blacks were arrested. Those who escaped the police raids

were unable to find any definite evidence of Poqo's existence. Even then it took a further five months before they could force the movement into the open, resulting in the Paarl riots when seven people were killed.

Operating from their headquarters in Langa near Cape Town against pro-government chiefs and headmen in Transkei Poqo task forces were responsible for killing at least three tribal chiefs during 1962 and 1963. They also carried out an unsuccessful attempt on the life of Chief Kaiser Matanzima at his Nhlonze-hill resi-

PAC members such as A B Ncobo and Peter Raboroko, who had disagreed with Leballo's leadership and with Chinese collaboration, preferring closer ties with the ANC and other South African freedom movements instead, were accused of deviating from PAC policy and kicked out of the organisation. Leballo's criticism of the OAU's support for the better-organised ANC inflicted further damage on the PAC's waning image in Africa. In 1967 an attempt was made to restore some semblance of calm and order to the seriously divided movement by convening the PAC's

Executive Committee at Moshi. Leballo praised Zambia for "keeping with the spirit of Pan-African solidarity" but this was subsequently nullified when the PAC launched an unsuccessful attack against South Africa from Zambian soil. The attack proved to be a serious setback for the PAC's image. The Zambian government was severely displeased by the incident that had taken place without the government's authorisation and withdrew all facilities from the PAC expelling it from the country. PAC dissidents then made renewed calls for Leballo's expulsion from the floundering movement.

Inside South Africa the PAC was losing ground to the ANC. Judging by the many trials that have taken place in South Africa since the late 1960s, the ANC has been far better organised and more active in arousing black consciousness within the country. These trials included those of the Anglican Dean of Johannesburg Joost de Blance in 1971; Isman A Haron who died in police custody in September 1969; and nine blacks, two Indians and two Coloureds in the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court in 1972, and revealed not only large quantities of illegal ANC material but also indicated the extent of ANC activity and that of its military wing, Umkonto we Sizwe among the non-white population of South Africa.

Student unrest during the early Seventies also indicated growing black consciousness in the country and demands for equal education and equal rights for all increased.

In spite of this, and the decisions South African Students' Organisation (SASO), at Hammanskraal (Transvaal) in July 1972 to change its name to the Pan-African Students Union, the PAC did little to exploit the situation, or aid the development of Pan-Africanism and black consciousness in South Africa.

In 1973 Leballo made an attempt to arrest the PAC's fast-deteriorating position by calling for international support and positive action against racism and white rule in South Africa. This failed to restore his own diminishing reputation or rekindle faith and interest in the PAC. A visit to Ghana in 1974 and the granting of observer status in the UN General Assembly in the same year proved equally inadequate in improving the movement's image as a liberation organisation.

The ANC on the other hand, has gone to great lengths to increase its influence and support both in and outside South Africa. The Soviet-orientated international Solidarity Conference held in Lisbon in July 1977 passed a resolution designating

the ANC sole authentic international representative of the South African people.

In June 1976 serious rioting erupted in Soweto when thousands of black students marched in protest against the use of Afrikaans as a second language of instruction in schools. The language issues served as a smoke screen for black consciousness movements like the ANC, SASO and others to express their growing dissatisfaction with the country's racial policies.

The riots are considered a warning shot and watershed in South African affairs, and have unleashed severe criticism of the country's racial policies strengthening repeated PAC and ANC calls for positive action to liberate the black peoples of South Africa.

Notwithstanding this the PAC and ANC have both come in for strong criticism by the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC) censuring them for their lack of support and aid during the riots.

Criticism was mainly directed at the PAC however as they were less active during the riots than the ANC. The PAC's limited interest in exploiting the Soweto situation can be ascribed largely to its leadership, and in particular Leballo's inability to unite and rebuild a movement which has been seriously weakened by deep-seated differences, leadership quarrels, splits, defections and expulsions during the last decade. This has come about in spite of claims by President Idi Amin of Uganda that his country has trained PAC freedom fighters who are doing a lot to mobilise the masses in South Africa and inciting them to rise against the apartheid regime.

A week before the death of Robert Sobukwe in February 1978, Angola and Algeria two of the 21 member states of the OAU's Liberation Committee devised a move to deprive the PAC of its OAU status, thereby favouring the ANC that is heavily backed by Moscow. Luanda is the chief centre of the ANC and there is no room for the PAC and its Peking backing. When the move to oust the PAC failed, Angola, backed by Zambia, Tanzania and Nigeria attempted the near-impossible task of uniting the PAC and ANC. As was expected, this ended in failure.

At present the PAC's activities abroad amount to little more than a lobby movement pressing claims against the ANC, its biggest rival in the liberation struggle of the peoples of South Africa.

The Freiburg Conference in West Germany has indicated that the PAC has a following of seven percent while ANC followers total 22 percent

in South Africa. Their idea of driving the white man into the sea is still very much a minority concept that does not have the support of the majority of blacks in South Africa who still hold out hopes for a future multi-racial democracy.

Although strongly divided and weakly supported, these organisations have nevertheless remained diametrically opposed to Afrikaner nationalism. Of all the black movements in South Africa they are least likely to negotiate with the South African government in their drive towards total liberation from white domination.

The PAC and ANC together with their Marxist collaborators have one aim in mind, to destroy white rule and apartheid in South Africa and set black majority rule in its place, whether this is democratic or not. In their goal they are not only supported, but also exploited by the Marxists. It is an accepted fact that the freedom struggle in Africa ultimately aims to totally destroy South Africa, that is considered the symbol of Africa's oppression and problems.

President Kaunda of Zambia, remarked that South Africa's apartheid system is the ultimate destination of the liberation struggle in Rhodesia and Namibia. He also described South Africa's existence in Africa as an active timebomb that threatens the very existence in Africa as a whole. It is therefore quite clear that the liberation of Rhodesia and Namibia are mere pre-stages in the marxists' drive against South Africa. This reality, as well as the personal aims and ambitions of black leaders and freedom movements that are competing for the honour of liberating Southern Africa, and South Africa in particular, has compelled them to follow the line set by marxist ideology, notwithstanding their claims to non-alignment.

This new line-up as well as the reality of the situation South Africa faces has created a new awareness among leading South Africans and members of the government that there is an urgent necessity to remove the conditions that breed communism.

The slow but meticulous development of Pan-Africanism, especially since Ghana's independence in 1957, signals a clear and strong determination among the different national movements and their leaders in Africa to bring about black majority rule. It is therefore important that the PAC and ANC, although they are weakly supported and seriously divided at present, should by no means be underestimated in their determination to bring international pressure to bear against South Africa. □